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SUBJECT: ASTANA COMMON WORLD FORUM: SENIOR OFFICIALS  
MEETING

REF: A) ASTANA 1573 B) STATE 90355

¶1. (SBU) This is an action message. Mission is requested to participate in the senior officials meeting (SOM) being held in Astana on August 28-29 in preparation for the October Common World Forum described in reftels. Mission should seek to achieve the following objectives:

-- obtain a new basis for the final communique in line with the five points outlined in ref b (repeated at para 6).

-- persuade the GOK to extend invitations to key Eurasian states not yet invited, as noted in ref b.

¶2. (SBU) In working towards these objectives, Mission should coordinate with other delegations, including contacts in advance of the SOM with other nations being represented by local Embassy officials. In these contacts, and in ongoing discussions with the GOK, Mission may draw on or present as a non-paper the full set of talking points at ref b, para 8. It should share the five alternate communique elements (repeated at para 6 below) with all SOM participants, so that they can serve as a basis for discussion at SOM sessions. Mission should note that the contents of the final communique will impact our ability to participate in October, and should encourage like-minded delegations to take the same position, if necessary seeking instructions to this effect in capitals. Mission is not authorized to agree to any communique or Astana Declaration language that goes beyond these five points.

¶3. (SBU) Mission may make clear to other SOM participants that the USG will not be able to accept the many explicit or implicit commitments in the current "Astana Declaration" draft that, for example, restrict the freedoms of press and expression; acknowledge other governments as "democratic" irrespective of their practices; support the "defamation of religions" concept and limit religious freedom; provide debt relief with a preference to certain states; support an International Convention on religious tolerance and a "Code of Honor for Politicians;" single out the Arab-Israeli conflict as the paramount issue driving civilizations apart; or endorse the Alliance of Civilizations and Human Rights Council (neither of which the U.S. is a member). On this basis, it should resist efforts to engage in a detailed discussion of the current draft as being an unproductive exercise.

¶4. (SBU) In conjunction with efforts to limit the communique, Mission should continue to encourage the GOK to broaden the invitation list to the October Forum, as outlined in ref b. It should note that there is little utility -- and perhaps some danger of fostering disharmony -- for the Forum to endorse steps in the name of the Muslim world and the West, if many Western nations, nations with significant indigenous Muslim populations, and nations which have had longstanding conflicts with Muslim nations are not invited, not able to agree on the steps, or otherwise unable to participate. Mission should encourage other delegations at

the SOM to join it in taking this position.

¶5. (SBU) Mission should seek information from other SOM participants on who will represent their nations at the main plenary session in October. In response to the Ref a question on U/S Burns, participation, Mission should note that we have not yet decided on the level or identity of USG participants.

¶6. (U) Elements for a Final Communique. Mission should encourage the SOM to endorse a brief final communique for the October Forum, limited to expressing in general terms that the participants:

a) welcome intercultural and interfaith dialogue, and support efforts to acknowledge shared values between Islam and other religions throughout the world;

b) encourage efforts to further mutual respect, tolerance, and understanding between religions and cultures;

c) promote people-to-people exchanges and the work of non-governmental organizations to help improve understanding of others, religions and cultures;

d) endorse future meetings like this that focus on common values shared by faiths, rather than as fora for the airing of specific political grievances; and

e) express their appreciation to the Government of Kazakhstan and to the Kazakh people for their hospitality and dedication to advance the principles enunciated above.

End Communique Elements.

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